

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

In complete response to the outstanding Official Action of September 28, 2006, on the above-identified application, reconsideration is respectfully requested. Claims 13-17 remain in this application.

Claim 13 has been amended to better define the invention. Support for this amendment may be found in the specification at page 8, last paragraph, through page 9, second from the last paragraph. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner enter these amendments, as they introduce no new matter, and require no further prior art searching.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 13-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Granier '489 in view of Rathbone '016. Applicants respectfully assert that claims 13-17 are not unpatentable in view of Granier '489 in view of Rathbone '016.

The Examiner notes that:

"The instant claims do not recite that the additional compressed air is "... being added to the portion of air that is diverted from the blast furnace feed" as argued, but rather that "... wherein said first portion of air is mixed with additional compressed air resulting in a combined feed air stream ..." which is met by Grenier '489 blowers (3) in parallel to stream 5 as discussed on page 4 of the 2/6/21006 office action."

Claim 13 is currently amended to add the limitation:

“wherein said blast furnace is fed by a blast furnace feed air stream, wherein a portion of said blast furnace feed air stream is diverted from said blast furnace feed stream forming a diverted stream, wherein said diverted stream is mixed with additional air to form a compressed air separation unit feed air stream, wherein the air separation unit is fed with said compressed air separation unit feed stream”.

A limitation which, as the Examiner points out, Grenier '489 neither teaches nor suggests. Hence, Claim 13 is not obvious in view of Grenier '489. As claims 14 – 17 are dependent upon claim 13, they are not obvious in view of Grenier '489 as well.

Rathbone '019 fails to remedy this deficiency in Grenier '489.

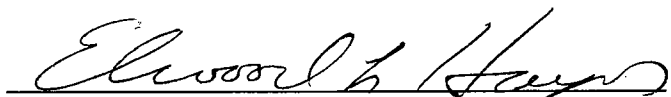
Therefore, one skilled in the art would find that neither Grenier '489 nor Rathbone '019, either alone or in combination, neither teach nor suggest all of the elements of independent claim 13 as currently amended.

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Attorney Docket No. Serie 5545 53(b)
Amendment dated December 19, 2006
Reply to Final Office Action of September 28, 2006

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, it is believed that the present application now stands in condition for allowance. Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited. Should the examiner believe a telephone call would expedite the prosecution of the application, he is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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